Topic 1: Capital Punishment and Safeguards in the Criminal Justice System (GS Paper II: Judiciary & Separation of Powers)

1. Context & Global Stand

- **UN Moratorium Vote:** India voted against a proposed global **moratorium on the death penalty** at the United Nations (UN), affirming retention as a sovereign decision anchored in rigorous statutory and judicial safeguards.
- **Judicial Execution vs. Extrajudicial Actions:** India maintains a formal distinction in international forums between court-adjudicated **judicial executions** and **extrajudicial killings** lacking trial or due process.

2. Institutional Framework & Safeguards

- **"Rarest of Rare" Doctrine:** Established to ensure capital punishment is restricted strictly to extraordinary cases where the alternative of life imprisonment is unequivocally inadequate.
- **Mandatory High Court Confirmation:** Sentences awarded by a **Sessions Court** cannot be executed unless confirmed by the jurisdictional **High Court**.
- **Statutory Trajectory:** While executions have ceased since 2020 (the Delhi gang-rape and murder case), Parliament expanded capital offences within the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS)**.

3. Structural Concerns & Judicial Precedents

Swelling Death Row: Death row reached **574 prisoners** at the end of 2025, driven largely by trial court sentences.

Fallibility & Reversals: A study by **Project 39A** (National Law University Delhi) revealed that the Supreme Court acquitted or released **38 death row prisoners** over the past decade, after they spent an average of **eight years** (some exceeding two decades) on death row.

Legal Representation Deficits: Vulnerable defendants rely heavily on overextended legal aid, leading to convictions rooted in flawed evidence or perjured testimony that take years to overturn on appeal.

Delay as Supervening Ground: In **Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India (2014)**, the Supreme Court held that inordinate and unexplained executive delay in deciding mercy petitions constitutes torture, serving as a ground for commuting death sentences to life imprisonment.

Penological Scrutiny: The **Law Commission of India's 262nd Report (2015)**, headed by Justice A.P. Shah, concluded that capital punishment fails to achieve any constitutionally valid penological goals and recommended abolishing it for all crimes except terrorism-related offences and waging war against the State.

Topic 2: Bail Jurisprudence, Victim Participation, and Undertrial Incarceration (GS Paper II: Fundamental Rights & Due Process)

1. Context & Bail Principles

Suspension of Life Sentences: The Supreme Court suspended the life sentences of two convicts in the **Bilkis Bano case** and granted them bail based on 17 years served and physical infirmity, prompting debate because the victim was not heard.

Liberty Norm: Indian jurisprudence establishes that **"bail is the rule and jail the exception"** under Article 21, protecting personal liberty from unjustified pre-trial detention.

2. Statutory Rights of Victims

Judicial Precedents on Victim Hearing:

Jagjeet Singh v. Ashish Mishra (2022): Affirmed the victim's right to participate and be heard at every critical stage of criminal proceedings, including bail.

Ms X v. State of Maharashtra (2023): Reaffirmed the right of sexual assault victims to be heard prior to granting relief or bail to convicts.

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS): Codifies victim participation into statute and broadens the definition of **"victim"** to include guardians and legal heirs.

3. Inequities in Bail Administration

Undertrial Disproportionality: Undertrials comprise approximately three out of every four prisoners in Indian jails. **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** figures record around **9,028 undertrials** held in custody for over five years.

Selective Relief vs. Prolonged Custody: Infirmity and age have been weighed inconsistently; relief granted in high-profile cases contrasts with decisions denying bail to elderly or severely disabled undertrials (such as the custody death of **Stan Swamy** in 2021).

Section 479 of BNSS: Enacted to facilitate the statutory release of long-held undertrials who have completed a specified fraction of their maximum potential sentence.

Topic 3: Electoral Revisions, Special Intensive Revision (SIR), and Marginalized Groups (GS Paper II: Representation of People Act)

1. Special Intensive Revision (SIR) Dynamics

Definition and Process: Initiated by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** (starting in Bihar in mid-2025), the SIR functions as an exhaustive door-to-door verification drive where unverified entries are dropped from draft rolls.

Scale of Deletions: In surveyed States and UTs, enrolled transgender electors dropped by **31.4%** (down to 31,300), falling below both 2024 (45,610) and 2019 Lok Sabha numbers. Delhi recorded an exclusion rate of approximately **64%** on draft rolls.

2. Historic Gains vs. Current Roll-Back

Third Gender Classification: The ECI introduced the **"Others"** gender category in 2009.

Voter Enrolment & Participation: Following the Supreme Court's **NALSA (2014)** ruling, registered third-gender voters nearly doubled between 2014 and 2024, with voter turnout rising sharply from **7.8% to 27%**.

Demographic Disconnect: Even at peak enrolment, electoral participation lagged behind the **Census 2011** transgender population figure of **4.84 lakh** (0.04% of India's population).

3. Documentation and Structural Exclusion

Certificate Prerequisite: Registration on the **National Portal for Transgender Persons** is required to obtain identity certificates that unlock voter cards, ration cards, and social welfare. As of late 2026, only **48,707**

registrations had taken place, with over **9,000 pending**, including 1,600 delayed past four months to a year.

Vulnerability to Deletion: Transgender citizens frequently face familial abandonment and forced migration, losing access to primary domicile documentation necessary to contest deletions during summary roll calls.

Topic 4: Legal Identity, Medicalization, and Transgender Healthcare (GS Paper II: Welfare Schemes & Social Justice)

1. Shift from Self-Perception to Medical Board Gatekeeping

Legislative Amendment: The **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026** altered the framework of the 2019 parent Act by withdrawing unconditional **self-identification**.

Dual Gatekeeping: Legal recognition now mandates a recommendation from a designated **medical board**, restricted identity categories, and final approval by the **District Magistrate (DM)**.

Exclusionary Definitions: The 2026 amendment removed explicit references to trans men, trans women, and genderqueer individuals from statutory definitions, confining recognition to specific socio-cultural categories (e.g., kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta) and biological sex variations—yet subjecting even cultural identities to medical verification.

2. Constitutional, International & Human Rights Standards

NALSA v. Union of India (2014): Ruled that self-determined gender identity is an inseparable facet of dignity, autonomy, and personal liberty under **Article 21** of the Constitution, explicitly disallowing mandatory medical intervention.

Global Norms: The amendment runs contrary to the **World Health Organization's ICD-11** (de-pathologizing gender identity) and the **World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care (Version 8)**.

Human Rights Inconsistencies: Contradicts the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) 2026 advisory**, which advocated for self-determination, simplified procedures, and accessible grievance channels.

3. Healthcare Impact & Welfare Initiatives

Compromised Clinical Care: Tying statutory certification to gender-affirming clinical interventions has caused healthcare providers to withdraw or stall services, pushing patients into unregulated markets for hormone therapy and surgeries.

Existing Government Interventions:

SMILE Scheme: Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise, operated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, funding shelter facilities such as **Garima Greh**.

Ayushman Bharat TG Plus: Special insurance cover linked directly to possession of the statutory transgender certificate.

Institutional Safeguards: Madras High Court's **Sushma (2021)** judgment mandated LGBTQIA+ sensitization across medical

Topic 5: Responsible Microfinance and Financial Consumer Protection (GS Paper III: Financial Inclusion & Mobilization of Resources)

1. Macro Profile of Microfinance

Sectoral Role: Serves low-income, unbanked households; its contribution to **Gross Value Added (GVA)** stood at 2.03% in 2018–19 and is projected at 2.7% by 2025–26.

Portfolio Health: According to the **SIDBI-Equifax Microfinance Pulse Report**, total outstanding microfinance debt fell 12% year-on-year to **Rs 2.69 lakh crore** across 7.15 crore active accounts.

Delinquency Dynamics: Early-stage delinquency (31–180 days) fell to **1.9%** (June 2026) from 6.1% a year prior, while chronic legacy defaults (>180 days) remained sticky at **17.4%**.

2. Regulatory Stance of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Underwriting Safeguards (2022 Master Directions):

Household Income Cap: Set at **Rs 3 lakh per annum**.

Repayment Burden (FOIR): A uniform **50%**

Fixed-Obligation-to-Income Ratio, restricting maximum debt obligations to half of monthly household income.

Industry Demands vs. Regulatory Refusal: Lenders requested raising the income cap and excluding loan principal from the FOIR. The RBI rejected this, highlighting that borrowers already spend **18.7%** of income on loan repayments alongside two-thirds on consumption.

Mindful Consent vs. Pseudo-Consent: Lenders are mandated to provide and explain the **Key Facts Statement (KFS)** in the local language, barring deceptive consent architectures.

Omnibus Marketing Regulations: New RBI standards on marketing and sale of financial products mandate transparent, non-deceptive disclosures effective **1 January 2027**.

Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs): MFIN and **Sa-Dhan** act as RBI-recognized SROs, though dual industry-advocacy and policing roles highlight the need for independent board governance.

Topic 6: Sub-National Unconditional Cash Transfers and Fiscal Prudence (GS Paper III: Fiscal Policy & Budgeting)

1. Fiscal Scale and Outlay

Macro Expansion: Unconditional cash transfers by States rose from **0.6% of GDP** in 2022–23 to roughly **1% of GDP** in 2026–27.

Budgetary Outlay: Based on a **PRS Legislative Research** study of 128 State schemes, the cumulative annual bill exceeded **Rs 4 lakh crore**.

Budget Absorption: Subsidies and transfers now absorb **21% of States' revenue receipts** (up from 16% in 2018–19), growing at **24% annually**—double the growth rate of traditional subsidies. In seven States, direct cash transfers comprise over half of all subsidy outlays.

2. Socio-Economic Outcomes vs. Macroeconomic Vulnerability

Beneficiary Profile: Women and social security pensioners receive nearly **90%** of all unconditional cash transfers.

Socio-Economic Safety Net: Evaluated positively by the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** in schemes like

Maharashtra's Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana and Odisha's Subhadra Yojana, establishing enhanced resilience against health shocks and better food and educational spending.

Fiscal Risks & Crowding Out: The RBI warned that large recurring cash entitlements introduce fiscal rigidity, potentially **crowding out vital capital expenditures** in physical infrastructure, schools, and hospitals amidst high sub-national debt.

Topic 7: Artificial Intelligence in Official Statistics & Data Integrity (GS Paper III: Planning & Statistical Architecture)

1. Modernizing Statistical Architecture: VISTAR

Institutional Initiative: The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (**MoSPI**) approved the **Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics & Research (VISTAR)** to dismantle departmental data silos and integrate alternative administrative and digital data.

Survey Expansion: Expands core surveys from **43 to 59** across the 16th Finance Commission cycle (e.g., Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises covering over 6.7 lakh informal units).

2. Synthetic Data and Modeling Risks

Synthetic Data Generation: Employs algorithms like **Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs)** to simulate real-world data patterns where ground-level surveys are sparse or costly.

Structural Pitfalls:

Amplified Biases: Replicates existing omissions in training data (e.g., female unpaid labor, agrarian informal debt).

Model Collapse: Degradation occurring when AI models are trained recursively on synthetic datasets rather than fresh primary empirical records.

Liar's Dividend: Public skepticism eroding trust in official data systems due to the proliferation of synthetic figures.

Allocation Distortion: Model inaccuracies at the district or block level can misallocate welfare resources under schemes like the **Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G)**.

Governance Frameworks: Adherence to the **UNECE 2025 Framework on Responsible AI for Official Statistics** and the **Gauss-Markov BLUE (Best Linear Unbiased Estimator)** criterion to ensure transparency, provenance labeling, and field verification.

MCQs

Q1. With reference to the administration of capital punishment in India, consider the following statements:

1. A death sentence passed by a Court of Sessions can be executed only after it is confirmed by the High Court.
2. In the Shatrughan Chauhan case (2014), the Supreme Court ruled that inordinate executive delay in disposing of mercy petitions can be a ground for commuting death sentences.
3. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, completely abolished capital punishment for non-fatal offences.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

Q2. Which of the following bodies recommended that the death penalty be abolished for all crimes except terrorism-related offences and waging war?
(a) Justice J.S. Verma Committee (2013)
(b) Law Commission of India, 262nd Report headed by Justice A.P. Shah
(c) National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC)
(d) Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the legal provisions governing victims' rights and bail in India:

The Supreme Court in Jagjeet Singh v. Ashish Mishra (2022) recognized the victim's right to be heard at all critical stages of a trial, including bail hearings.

Under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, the definition of a "victim" is restricted strictly to the individual against whom the offence was directly committed.

Section 479 of the BNSS contains statutory provisions aimed at easing the release of long-held undertrial prisoners who have served a specified portion of the maximum sentence.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

Q4. With reference to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) undertaken by the Election Commission of India (ECI), consider the following statements:

Under the SIR process, electors whose physical presence or documentation cannot be verified are liable to be removed from draft rolls.

The category "Others" was first introduced on voter registration forms by the ECI following the 2024 general elections.

Transgender voter turnout in Lok Sabha elections more than tripled between the 2014 and 2024 elections.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

Q5. In the context of transgender rights in India, consider the following statements regarding the landmark NALSA v. Union of India (2014) judgment:

It held that the right to self-determined gender identity is protected under Article 21 of the Constitution.

It mandated gender-affirming surgical intervention as an indispensable precondition for obtaining legal recognition as a transgender person.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q6. Consider the following pairs of Government Schemes/Institutions and their primary objectives:

SMILE Scheme: Livelihood and welfare support, including Garima Greh shelter homes for transgender persons.

Ayushman Bharat TG Plus: Dedicated health insurance coverage for transgender persons linked to certification.

VISTAR Initiative: Microfinance credit guarantee fund administered by SIDBI.

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?
(a) Only one pair
(b) Only two pairs
(c) All three pairs
(d) None of the pairs

Q7. With reference to the regulatory framework governing Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), consider the following statements:

A microfinance loan is defined as a collateral-free loan provided to households with an annual income up to Rs 3 lakh.

The RBI permits lenders to cap the Fixed-Obligation-to-Income Ratio (FOIR) at up to 75% of monthly household income in rural regions.

The Key Facts Statement (KFS) summarizing all loan costs and terms must be explained to borrowers in their local language.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

Q8. Consider the following statements regarding Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) in the microfinance sector:

Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN) and Sa-Dhan are both recognized by the Reserve Bank of India as SROs.

Microfinance accounts represent over 25% of total commercial bank credit in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q9. With reference to the trends in sub-national public finance in India, consider the following statements:

Unconditional cash transfers across States account for roughly 1% of India's GDP in 2026–27.

Women and social security pensioners constitute nearly 90% of the beneficiaries under State unconditional cash transfer schemes.

Subsidies and cash transfers consume more than 40% of States' aggregate revenue receipts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

Q10. The Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana and Subhadra Yojana, recently studied by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), pertain to which States respectively?
(a) Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh
(b) Maharashtra and Odisha
(c) Gujarat and Rajasthan
(d) Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

Q11. In economics and public financial management, what does the term "Crowding Out" specifically imply in the context of rising revenue expenditures?

(a) Reduction in export competitiveness due to currency appreciation
(b) Displacement of private and productive capital infrastructure investments due to committed debt and transfer payments
(c) Involuntary migration of workforce from rural to urban manufacturing centers
(d) Excessive concentration of credit disbursements within public sector banks

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Q12. With reference to the modernization of official statistics under the VISTAR initiative, consider the following statements:

1. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
2. It aims to integrate alternative administrative and digital datasets using Machine Learning to bridge departmental data silos.
3. It completely replaces primary field surveys with Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

Q13. In the context of artificial intelligence and machine learning in public policy, what does the phenomenon of "Model Collapse" refer to?

(a) The sudden server outage of public data repositories

(b) The degradation in quality and accuracy that occurs when AI models are recursively trained on synthetic data generated by other models

(c) The violation of data privacy standards when sharing administrative records

(d) The complete exhaustion of computational memory during neural network training

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Q14. Consider the following international/institutional frameworks:

1. UNECE Framework on Responsible AI for Official Statistics
2. WPATH Standards of Care (Version 8)
3. ICD-11 by the World Health Organization

Which of the frameworks listed above are specifically associated with clinical standards and depathologization of transgender health and gender identity?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2, and 3

Q15. In econometrics and survey methodology, what does the property of "BLUE" (Gauss-Markov theorem) stand for?

(a) Best Linear Unbiased Estimator

(b) Balanced Longitudinal Universal Evaluation

(c) Bayesian Linear Unified Estimation

(d) Broad Line Unbiased Evidence

Answer Key & Explanations

Q1. Correct Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Under the Code of Criminal Procedure / statutory judicial safeguards, a death sentence awarded by a Sessions Court cannot be executed unless confirmed by the High Court.

Statement 2 is correct: In Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India (2014), the Supreme Court ruled that unexplained and undue executive delays in deciding clemency petitions violate the right to life under Article 21, allowing commutation to life imprisonment.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Parliament has not abolished capital punishment for non-fatal crimes; rather, it has expanded capital offences in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS).

Q2. Correct Answer: (b) Law Commission of India, 262nd Report headed by Justice A.P. Shah

Explanation: In its 262nd Report (2015), the Law Commission of India observed that capital punishment fails to achieve penological objectives and recommended its abolition for all crimes, retaining an exception solely for terrorism-related offences and waging war against the state.

Q3. Correct Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Jagjeet Singh v. Ashish Mishra (2022) affirmed the victim's participatory rights at every stage of criminal justice proceedings, including bail.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The BNSS expands the definition of "victim" beyond the primary victim to explicitly include guardians and legal heirs.

Statement 3 is correct: Section 479 of the BNSS was enacted to facilitate the release of undertrial prisoners who have undergone detention extending to a designated proportion of the maximum imprisonment period.

Q4. Correct Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: The SIR is a verification drive where unverified entries are dropped from the draft rolls.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The ECI first introduced the "Others" category on electoral rolls in 2009, not after 2024.

Statement 3 is correct: Between the 2014 and 2024 Lok Sabha elections, transgender voter turnout rose from 7.8% to 27%.

Q5. Correct Answer: (a) 1 only

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: In NALSA (2014), the Supreme Court recognized self-determination of gender identity as an integral part of autonomy and dignity under Article 21.

Statement 2 is incorrect: NALSA explicitly rejected making legal gender identity conditional on medical or surgical interventions.

Q6. Correct Answer: (b) Only two pairs (Pairs 1 and 2)

Explanation:

Pair 1 is correctly matched: The SMILE scheme (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) supports livelihood and rehabilitation, including Garima Greh shelter homes.

Pair 2 is correctly matched: Ayushman Bharat TG Plus provides healthcare coverage to transgender individuals holding valid statutory certification.

Pair 3 is incorrectly matched: VISTAR (Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics & Research) is MoSPI's initiative to overhaul official statistics through data integration and AI, not a microfinance fund.

Q7. Correct Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Under the RBI's 2022 regulatory framework, a microfinance loan is a collateral-free loan to households with annual income up to Rs 3 lakh.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The RBI mandates a uniform 50% FOIR cap across all microfinance lending, firmly refusing industry pleas for higher or flexible regional caps.

Statement 3 is correct: The Key Facts Statement (KFS) must clearly delineate all costs and be explained in the borrower's local language to ensure mindful consent.

Q8. Correct Answer: (a) 1 only

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Both MFIN and Sa-Dhan are industry bodies recognized by the RBI as Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs).

Statement 2 is incorrect: Microfinance loans represent less than 0.4% of total bank credit in India.

Q9. Correct Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Unconditional cash transfers rose to roughly 1% of GDP in 2026–27 (around Rs 4 lakh crore across 128 State schemes).

Statement 2 is correct: Approximately 90% of the funds disbursed through these transfer schemes go to women and pensioners.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Subsidies and cash transfers account for about 21% (roughly one-fifth) of States' revenue receipts, not over 40%.

Q10. Correct Answer: (b) Maharashtra and Odisha

Explanation: Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana is an unconditional transfer scheme in Maharashtra, while Subhadra Yojana is implemented in Odisha. Both were analyzed by the EAC-PM regarding their household welfare impact.

Q11. Correct Answer: (b) Displacement of private and productive capital infrastructure investments due to committed debt and transfer payments

Explanation: In public finance, crowding out occurs when rising non-discretionary or committed revenue expenditures (such as debt servicing and cash transfers) compress budgetary headroom, reducing outlays for growth-inducing capital infrastructure.

Q12. Correct Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: VISTAR is spearheaded by MoSPI.

Statement 2 is correct: It utilizes machine learning to clean, link, and combine alternative digital and administrative datasets.

Statement 3 is incorrect: VISTAR does not replace field surveys; it expands major physical surveys from 43 to 59 during the 16th Finance Commission cycle.

Q13. Correct Answer: (b) The degradation in quality and accuracy that occurs when AI models are recursively trained on synthetic data generated by other models

Explanation: As highlighted by the World Economic Forum, "model collapse" occurs when machine learning models are trained repeatedly on synthetic content, compounding uncorrected errors and degrading outputs over successive generations.

Q14. Correct Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation:

WPATH Standards of Care (Version 8) and **WHO's ICD-11** establish international health and psychiatric standards depathologizing gender identity.

UNECE Framework (2025) pertains to responsible artificial intelligence in official statistics.

Q15. Correct Answer: (a) Best Linear Unbiased Estimator

Explanation: In statistics and econometric theory, the Gauss-Markov theorem states that under standard linear regression assumptions, the ordinary least squares estimator achieves the minimum variance among all linear unbiased estimators, earning the title **Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE)**.